

Message Text

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S E C R E T TEHRAN 2990

NODIS

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, IR, XF
SUBJ: BRIEFING FOR SHAH ON BEGIN VISIT

REF: STATE 077948

1. IN ACCORDANCE INSTRUCTIONS REFTEL, I FLEW TO KISH ISLAND MORNING MARCH 28 TO BRIEF SHAH ON BEGIN VISIT TO WASHINGTON. SHAH EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR BRIEFING AND SAID BEGIN'S STANCE IN WASHINGTON SEEMED TO BEAR OUT VIEWS WHICH HE HAD EXPRESSED DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO TEHRAN.

2. IN GENERAL, SHAH SAID HE WAS NOT RPT NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT ISRAELI WILLINGNESS TO TAKE THE HARD DECISIONS WHICH WOULD BE NECESSARY TO ASSURE A MIDDLE EAST PEACE. HE CITED THE HISTORICAL ATTITUDE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE TOWARDS SUFFERING AND PERSECUTION AND SAID THEY MIGHT HAVE DIFFICULTY ENVISAGING A REAL PEACE THAT WAS FREE OF THESE ELEMENTS. HE THEN WENT ON THE SAY THERE WERE PEOPLE LIKE WEIZMAN AND EBAN WHO MIGHT BE ABLE INTELLECTUALLY TO MAKE RIGHT MOVES BUT HE DOUBTED THEY HAD THE POLITICAL POWER TO TAKE OFFICE.

3. HE THEN EXPRESSED HIS OWN ASTONISHMENT THAT SOVIETS HAD KEPT SO QUIET IN CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES. HE SUPPOSED THE POLICY OF "NO PEACE, NO WAR" SUITED RUSSIAN INTERESTS,
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AND THAT THEY ARE GAMBLING ON HOPE SADAT WILL BECOME SO FRUSTRATED THAT HE MAY TURN ONCE AGAIN TO MOSCOW FOR AID. ALTERNATIVELY, THEY MAY BELIEVE THAT SADAT WILL BE OVERTHROWN AND THAT MOSCOW WILL BE THE BENEFICIARY.

4. SHAH SAID HE HAD IMPRESSION SADAT WAS BECOMING INCREASINGLY ISOLATED AMONG THE ARABS, WHO WERE REFUSING TO TAKE HIM

SERIOUSLY. HE SAID IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE RESPONSIBLE ARAB LEADERS, PARTICULARLY IN SAUDI ARABIA, REFRAIN FROM ANY PUBLIC CRITICISM OF SADAT. IT MIGHT BE TEMPTING FOR THEM TO SAY, "I TOLD YOU SO", BUT THAT WOULD ONLY MAKE THINGS WORSE. HE SAID KING HUSSEIN, WHO WAS VISITING KISH (AND WHOM I DID NOT SEE) WOULD STAY QUIET, BUT HUSSEIN WAS PROFOUNDLY PESSIMISTIC THAT THE SADAT EFFORT WOULD GET ANYWHERE.

5. IN GENERAL, SHAH WELCOMED PRESIDENT'S DETERMINATION TO PERSEVERE, BUT FELT NO SENSE OF OPTIMISM. HE THOUGH MOST IMPORTANT MATTER AT THIS STAGE WAS TO HELP SADAT SURVIVE, AND TO BE SURE THE EGYPTIAN ECONOMY DOES NOT COLLAPSE.
SULLIVAN

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